

ENGL 4520/5520, Spring 2013
British Lit: Victorian Literature
Section 001
W, 7:20 pm – 9:50 pm, FH 1200

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Office hrs. W 2 – 5:00 pm, F 1:30 –
3:30 pm & by appointment

FAMILY VALUES: DOMESTICITY & VICTORIAN LITERATURE

The Victorian period (1837-1901) not only witnessed enormous technological, social, and political advances but also the defeat of many old habits of thinking and ways of living. During this time of intense social and political change, the family was often held up as the only certainty, a source of security in a world of upheaval. Of course, in real life, families in the Victorian period were just as complicated and fraught with problems as they are now. Hence, it's no surprise that Victorian literature not only obsessively explores the family but also reflects the tension between the ideal and the real. Depictions of domesticity from this period are wide-ranging, including affirmations of the domestic ideal, nervous acknowledgments of its failure, and explicit challenges to its assumptions and values. Since domesticity was such a dominant cultural preoccupation, we will use the family as a touchstone for our exploration of Victorian literature. We will read thematically, not chronologically, and we will investigate the portrayal of family in works by Charles Dickens, George Eliot, Robert Browning, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Christina Rossetti, Oscar Wilde, and others. The course is by no means an exhaustive survey of Victorian domesticity, nor is the family the only topic we will consider in this class. But the general rubric will help us to organize our investigation and to build a common vocabulary over the course of the semester. Moreover, since many of the period's most prominent writers take up the question of domesticity in relation to urgent questions of literary form, making the subject of the family an important vehicle for literary experimentation, we will also use this course to recognize and respond to the particulars of genre, literary style, and language.

OBJECTIVES

- Recognize, analyze, and critique the relations between literature and larger national, historical, socio-political, and cultural contexts from the nineteenth century
- Acquire knowledge of literary history
- Recognize, identify, and analyze key genres from the Victorian period
- Recognize, identify, and analyze formal elements of Victorian literature, such as language and narrative
- Apply knowledge of literary studies to close readings of texts
- Present and defend arguments in writing
- Improve oral skills through discussion
- Cultivate concentration, introspection, imagination, aesthetic appreciation, sympathy, and awareness of ethical questions through literature
- Identify broad points of connection between our contemporary culture and the historical past through literature

COURSE EXPECTATIONS & CLASS POLICIES

- **ATTENDANCE AT EVERY CLASS IS MANDATORY.** This course follows UT's official missed class policy; see http://www.utoledo.edu/facsenate/missed_class_policy.html. As noted in this policy, attendance at each class is required, and you must provide documentation for all personal emergencies (as defined by the Board of Trustees' Policy on Family and Medical Leave), deaths, religious observances, UT-sponsored events, or government activities. You must notify of me about these issues in person, via email, or by phone, and we can work together to determine a reasonable solution. Please note that chronic illness does not count as an emergency; if you suffer from long-term health or any other chronic problems, it is your responsibility to consult with me before problems arise. Finally, if you have some special reason for needing to miss class aside from those mentioned in the UT class policy, then please discuss it with me; I'm always willing to listen.
- **IF YOU HAVE A DISABILITY** that requires accommodations, then please talk to me about it immediately. You must also document the condition with an advocacy memo from the UT Office of Accessibility (x4981, <http://www.utoledo.edu/success/academicaccess/>).
- **NO LATE WORK** will be accepted. Contact me if you are struggling to meet a deadline!
- **LATE PEOPLE** are disruptive. Extreme or repeated lateness will count as an absence.
- **APPROPRIATE USE OF TECHNOLOGY IS EXPECTED.** The use of the technology in the classroom is a privilege designed to facilitate learning; it is not there for personal use. Any inappropriate use of technology is a disruption, which the UT Student Code of Conduct defines as an action that "interferes with, hinders, obstructs, or prevents the right of others to freely participate in [the university's] . . . academic settings." <https://www.utoledo.edu/studentaffairs/conduct/> This includes distracting others with your FB or web surfing! If I notice that you are using technology inappropriately or someone else in class informs me that you are, **you will lose 10 points each time** and will be asked to keep the device off your desk.
- **NO FOOD, PLEASE.** Drinks are fine, but food is distracting to others.
- **PLAGIARISM** will result in an F in the course, and that F will be identified on your transcript as having been received for academic dishonesty. Disciplinary reports will also be filed with the departmental Chair, Dean of LLSS, and Dean of Students. These consequences will be imposed even if you later claim that the plagiarism was unintentional or accidental. Any paper with your name on it signifies that you are the author and that the wording and major ideas are yours (the exception being quotation marks and citations), and you will be held responsible for all work that you submit. Please see the official UT policy statement on academic dishonesty at http://www.utoledo.edu/catalog/2000catalog/admissions/academic_dishonesty.html. If you are unsure what constitutes plagiarism, please make an appointment with me and/or explore this UT Libguide on the subject: <http://libguides.utoledo.edu/content.php?pid=102028&sid=1065810>
- **FACEBOOK** is great, but I cannot friend you until after you've graduated.

CLASS READINGS

- Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) — Norton is recommended
- Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations* (1860-61) — Penguin Classics or Norton edition recommended
- George Eliot, *The Mill on the Floss* (1860) — Penguin or Norton recommended
- Other primary readings and secondary articles are available online through Blackboard and/or the Carlson Library electronic reserve.

ASSIGNMENTS

Quizzes (10 Pop Quizzes at 10 points each)	100 points
Research Essay (First and Final Draft Required)	125 points
Take-Home Exam	100 points
Final Exam (in class)	100 points
TOTAL	425 points* **

***CLASSROOM PARTICIPATION COUNTS.** Outstanding in-class participation (receiving a $\sqrt{+}$) has the potential to raise your final grade by one-third. Exceptionally poor participation (receiving a $\sqrt{-}$) may lower your final grade by one-third. Average participation will not affect your final grade. We will discuss what constitutes “excellent,” “average,” or “poor” classroom participation. Your assigned note taking is included in this grade.

****GRADUATE STUDENTS** will be assigned additional assignments and/or appropriate substitutions for the above work. We’ll discuss this in person.

GRADING

A → 400-425	B → 353-373	C → 310-331 →	D → 268-287
A- → 383-399	B- → 340-352	C- → 298-309 →	D- → 255-267
B+ → 374-382	C+ → 332-339	D+ → 289-297 →	F → 0-254

A = EXEMPLARY: An “A” paper or exam may serve as a model of excellence to others. It takes the features of the “B” paper/exam and sustains them throughout the paper. “A” papers/exams have something they can teach the professor and students, enriching their understanding of the material in some way. An “A” paper/exam need not be perfect, but should indicate an insightful reader and a very careful writer.



B = GOOD: Exceeds the basic criteria of the assignment, giving the “C” paper/exam distinction by adding to it a convincing argument, a moment or two of especially graceful or powerful writing, an original or daring interpretation, or evidence of extra work.



C = SATISFACTORY: The assignment has been completed in good faith, with no glaring grammatical or structural errors, and with a competent, if obvious, understanding of the literature and ideas under discussion.



D = MARGINAL: Fails to meet all requirements in some way, but what has been completed may be considered at least competent. Or, meets all requirements but below a basic level of competence.



F = FAILING: Falls significantly short of requirements, or basic competence, or both.

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SCHEDULE OF READINGS & ASSIGNMENTS

Week One **Note taker(s):** _____

W, Jan. 9 Welcome to the course! Introductions, syllabus overview, and so forth.

Excerpt from Alfred Lord Tennyson, *In Memoriam* (1849), Stanza LXXXIV / 84 (online in the “Victorian Families” unit on Blackboard)

Augusta Webster, Sonnet VII from *Mother and Daughter* (1895) (online in the “Victorian Families” unit on Blackboard)

Handout on “The Victorian Domestic Ideal” (online in the “Victorian Families” unit on Blackboard)

AH, THE SINGLE LIFE? BACHELORS AND BACHELORETTEs

Week Two **Note taker(s):** _____

W, Jan. 16 Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations* (1860-61), Book I, chps. 1-19

Week Three **Note taker(s):** _____

W, Jan. 23 Dickens, cont'd, *Great Expectations*, Book II, chps. 1-16 (*or, if you're using an edition w/continuous chapters, then this would be chps. 20-35*)

Assign Research Essay.

Week Four **Note taker(s):** _____

W, Jan. 30 Dickens, cont'd, *Great Expectations*, Book II, chp. 17 - Book III, chp. 9 (*or chps. 36-48*). Also read the original manuscript ending in the appendix to your book.

COURTSHIP

Week Five **Note taker(s):** _____

W, Feb. 6 Oscar Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895) (online)

MARRIAGE: MEN AND WOMEN, HUSBANDS AND WIVES

Week Six **Note taker(s):** _____

W, Feb. 13 Robert Browning, excerpts from *Men and Women* (1855) (online)

Week Seven **Note taker(s):** _____

W, Feb. 20 George Meredith, "Modern Love" (1862) (online)

Optional but recommended to improve your reading comprehension of this poem: Dorothy Mermin, "Clough and Meredith," from *The Audience In the Poem: Five Victorian Poets*. New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1983 (online). Skip the section on Clough and begin on page 126 where Mermin begins to discuss Meredith in detail.

CHILDREN

Week Eight **Note taker(s):** _____

M, Feb. 25 **DRAFT 1 OF RESEARCH ESSAY DUE BY MIDNIGHT.** Email as an MS Word file (.doc or .docx) to Dr. Gregory. For organizational purposes, please name your file "LAST NAME Draft 1." See assignment sheet for further details.

W, Feb. 27 Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865)

SPRING BREAK, MARCH 4 - 8

Week Nine **Note taker(s):** _____

W, Mar. 13 J. M. Barrie, *Peter Pan* (1904), including the very important "Dedication," and *When Wendy Grew Up: An Afterthought* (1908) (online)

Examine the book created by Barrie of the "Boy Castaways of Black Lake Island" in the Blackboard course module on *Peter Pan*.

Week Ten **Note taker(s):** _____

W, Mar. 20 Christina Rossetti, *Sing-Song* (1872) (online)

Assign Take Home Exam.

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Week Eleven **Note taker(s):** _____

W, March 27 Elizabeth Barrett Browning, "Runaway Slave at Pilgrim's Point" (1847) (online)

R, March 28 **FINAL DRAFT OF RESEARCH ESSAY DUE BY MIDNIGHT.** See assignment sheet for details.

Week Twelve **Note taker(s):** _____

W, April 3 Augusta Webster, "Medea" (1870) (online)

Amy Levy, "Medea" (1884) (online)

SIBLINGS (AND FATHERS)

Week Thirteen **Note taker(s):** _____

M, April 8 **TAKE HOME EXAM DUE**

W, April 10 George Eliot, *The Mill on the Floss* (1860) (Books 1-2)

Week Fourteen **Note taker(s):** _____

W, April 17 Eliot, cont'd (Books 3-5)

Week Fifteen **Note taker(s):** _____

W, April 24 Eliot, cont'd (Book 6-7)
Final thoughts

Final Exam Week, April 29 – May 3

R, May 2 **FINAL EXAM 7:30 – 9:30 pm**